

# Valley

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## EARTH: Residents Plant Trees

The day's largest crowd was at EarthFaire 2000, a wide-ranging festival that drew an estimated 15,000 to Exposition Park in Los Angeles. The event kicked off with a downtown rally at Pershing Square followed by the Clean Energy Ride and Walk, a four-mile procession by foot, bicycle and alternative-fuel vehicles to the Coliseum.

From the dozens of environmental groups doling out literature to the organic food booths and the company promoting its *feng shui* services, EarthFaire had something for everyone.

Even lonely hearts. Caring-Singles.com, a matchmaking service that encourages singles to participate in a community service event as a first date, organized a local neighborhood cleanup.

The Santa Ana Zoo commemorated Earth Day with a celebration of its own that included special environmental displays.

And in midtown Ventura, a group of about 25 neighbors and friends—plus boys from Cub Scout Troop 3176—planted milkweed bushes and poppies and pulled weeds on a former dumping site. Once a hangout for prostitutes and drug dealers, the lush Midtown Monarch Paradise Park is now attracting native birds and butterflies, thanks to about \$1,300 in state grants and a lot of volunteer time from residents.

The event at Hansen Dam Recreation Area on Saturday was organized by the environmental group TreePeople.

Participants planted oaks and sycamores, the majority donated by the California Department of Forestry. The trees were worth about \$26,000.

Jim Summers, a senior forestry manager with TreePeople, said trees have a better chance of survival when people who live in the community plant them. "It's their place, it's their forest, it belongs to them," he said.

But the effort attracted volunteers from throughout Los Angeles.

"They're learning about Pacoima—that there are people here and who are proud of where they live," Summers said, adding that in February TreePeople planted 150 trees at Hansen Dam.

The trees are especially needed near Pacoima, which doesn't have much green space, said Newmark.

Trees will cool temperatures and reduce flooding in the area, Newmark said, adding that trees and



WALLY SKALLI / Los Angeles Times



BEATRICE de GEA / Los Angeles Times

A volunteer, above, removes garbage from the harbor at Marina del Rey during Earth Day activities Saturday. Left, Adam Skolnick of the TreePeople environmental group assists young volunteers with a tree planting at Hansen Dam Recreation Area in Lake View Terrace. Volunteers planted 450 trees at the park.

grass help capture rainwater that asphalt can't.

"This is a beginning step to make it a more habitable place," said Newmark.

Jamie Long was one of about 15 students from the environmental club at Harvard-Westlake School in Studio City who participated.

"I love being able to give back to the environment, to fix some of the things we've messed up in L.A.," said Long, 18, of Sherman Oaks.

With Saturday marking the 30th celebration of Earth Day, some worry the event has been co-opted by commercial interests, obscuring the call to action.

"I think it's becoming kind of commercial, but I think that's a good thing," said Charlie Saylan, director of the Ocean Conservation Society.

"No matter how watered down the message is, it's still the same message—a message that needs to

be reiterated and reiterated and reiterated," Saylan said.

"A lot of grass-roots groups don't feel that way. But I don't know who says that protection of the environment is reserved for the grass-roots environmentalists. If we all did it, we wouldn't have a problem."

Times staff writer Meg James and correspondent Gina Piccalo contributed to this story.